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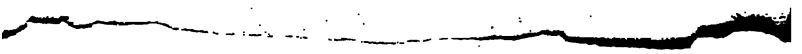
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Battle
of Breed's Hill.
By Generals Heath, Lee, Wilkinson and Dearborn.


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HISTORY

OF THE

BATTLE OF BREED'S HILL,

BY

MAJOR-GENERALS WILLIAM HEATH, HENRY LEE, JAMES WILKINSON AND HENRY DEARBORN.

COMPILED BY CHARLES COFFIN.

Portland:
D. C. COLESWORTHY, PRINTER.
1835.

HAVING for years been satisfied that the accounts of Breed's Hill Battle, as given by Gordon, Warren, Ramsey and Marshall, are defective and imperfect, I have been induced to publish the transaction of that memorable event, as given by four American Major Generals, who were either in the action or had the best possible opportunities of being fully acquainted with the details of it. And who from their profession were better qualified to give a full and fair narrative, than any others who have undertaken it. To which are added the depositions of a number of highly respectable gentlemen who were eye witnesses of and partakers of the glory of that proud day.

The following sheets, it is believed, will give a more full and accurate view of the troops engaged, by whom commanded, and all the transactions of the day, than any narrative extant.

My objects are truth and justice to the living and the dead.

PORTLAND. THE COMPILER.

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BATTLE OF BREED'S HILL.

An Account of the Battle of Bunker's or Breed's Hill, extracted from the Memoirs of Major-General WM. HEATH, *printed and published August*, 1798.

IN the month of June, it was determined to take possession of the heights of Charlestown. Preparations were made for the purpose; and on the 16th, at night, a strong detachment from the American army marched on, and broke ground on *Breed's Hill*, in front of Bunker's Hill. The latter ought to have been taken possession of at the same time, but it was somehow omitted.

By the morning of the 17th, the troops had a redoubt and line on its left flank in good forwardness, when they were discovered by the British. The lively man of war first began to cannonade the Americans; she was soon seconded by other ships, floating batteries, and some cannon on *Cop's Hill*, on the Boston side, which the Americans bore with a good degree of firmness, and continued at their work. The British army in Boston were greatly alarmed at this near approach, and immediately resolved on an attack, before the works could be completed. A detachment was formed for the purpose, consisting of ten companies of Grenadiers, ten of Light Infantry, and the 5th, 38th, 43d, and 52d regiments, and a corpse of Artillery, under the command of Maj. Gen. Howe, and Brig. Gen. Pigot. In the afternoon they landed on Charlestown Point without opposition, where they were afterwards reinforced by the 47th regiment and the first battalion of marines. The regiments in Cambridge camp were ordered down to support the detachment at Charlestown, and to occupy other posts thought to be essential, and contiguous thereto. The British began their attack with a severe fire of artillery, and advanced in a slow and regular pace. The Americans who had marched on to the aid of the detachment, consisted of the New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut troops, hastily formed a line of defence, composed of rails and other materials found nearest at hand. This line extended down towards the low ground on the left, and was nobly defended. The Americans reserved their fire until the British came very near, when they gave it to great effect; it staggered, and even broke them, but they rallied, and returned to the charge again and again, drove the Americans from the lines on the left of the redoubt, and had nearly surrounded it, when the Americans rushed out of the redoubt,

their ammunition being expended, and made their retreat, even through part of the British forces. About this time Maj. Gen. Warren, who had been but a few days before commissioned, and was then on the hill as a spectator only, was killed. A number of Americans were killed in retreating from Breed's Hill, to Bunker Hill, and some in passing off over the neck. Perhaps there never was a better fought battle than this, all things considered; and too much praise can never be bestowed on the conduct of Col. William Prescott, who, notwithstanding any thing that may have been said, *was the proper commanding officer*, at the redoubt, and nobly acted his part as such, during the whole action.

Just before the action began, Gen. Putnam came to the redoubt, and told Col. Prescott that the entrenching tools must be sent off, or they would be lost; the Colonel replied, that if he sent any of the men away with the tools, not one of them would return; to this the General answered, they shall every man return. A large party was then sent off with the tools, and not one of them returned; in this instance the Colonel was the best judge of human nature. In the time of action, Col. Prescott observed that the brave Gen. Warren was near the works; he immediately stepped up to him, and asked him if he had any orders to give him. The General replied that he had none, that he exercised no command there — 'The command,' said the General, 'is yours.'

While many officers and soldiers gallantly distinguished themselves in this action, others were blamed, and some were brought to trial by court-martial. This was a sore battle to the British, who did not forget it, during several campaigns, nor until a tide of successes in their favor had removed it from their minds. Their whole force on this day, which was in action, was supposed to be about 2,000, and their whole loss, in killed and wounded, was said to be upwards of 1,000, of whom 226 were killed, and of these, 19 were commissioned officers, including one Lieutenant Colonel, two Majors, and seven Captains. Another account stated their killed and wounded to be 753 privates, 202 sergeants and corporals, and 92 commissioned officers; in the whole, 1047. The loss of the Americans, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, was about 450.

At the time the British made their attack, the houses in Charlestown were set on fire, and burnt most furiously, which increased the horrors of the scene. At the same time a furious cannonade and throwing of shells took place at the lines on Boston neck, against Roxbury, with intent to burn that town; but although several shells fell among the houses, and some carcasses near them, and balls went through some; no other damage was sustained than the loss of one man killed by a shot driving a stone from the wall against him.

Reflections on the Campaigns of Sir William Howe, on his resigning the command of the British Armies in America, with an incidental account of the battle of Bunker's Hill, extracted from Major General Henry Lee's 'Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States,' Published 1812.

It is impossible to pass over this period of the American war without giving vent to some of those reflections which it necessarily excites. Sir William Howe was considered one of the best soldiers in England, when charged with the important trust of subduing the revolted colonies. Never did a British General, in any period of that nation, command an army better fitted to insure success than the one submitted to his direction, whether we regard its comparative strength with that opposed to it, the skill of the officers, the discipline and courage of the soldiers, the adequacy of all the implements and munitions of war, and the abundance of the best supplies of every sort. In addition, his brother Lord Howe commanded a powerful fleet on our coast, for the purpose of subserving the views, and supporting the measures of the commander in chief. Passing over the criminal supineness which marked his conduct after the battle of Long Island, and the fatal mistake of the plan of the campaign 1777, (the first and leading feature of which ought to have been junction with Burgoyne and the undisturbed possession of the North river) we must be permitted to look at him with scrutinous though impartial eyes, when pursuing his own object and directed by his own judgment, after his disembarkation at the head of the Chesapeake.

We find him continuing to omit pressing the various advantages he dearly gained, from time to time. He was ever ready to appeal to the sword, and but once retired from his enemy. But he does not seem to have known, that to win a victory was but the first step in the actions of a great captain. To improve it is as essential; and unless the first is followed by the second, the conqueror ill requites those brave companions of his toils and perils, to whose disregard of difficulties and contempt of death he is so much indebted for the laurel which entwines his brow; and basely neglects his duty to his country, whose confidence in his zeal for her good, had induced her to commit to his keeping, her fame and interest.

After his victory at Brandywine, he was, by his own official statement, less injured than his adversary; yet with many of his corps, entire and fresh, we find him wasting three precious days, with the sole ostensible object of sending his wounded to Wilmington. Surely the detachment, charged with this service, was adequate to their protection on the field of battle, as afterwards on the march; and certainly it required no great exertion of mind to have made this arrangement in the course

of one hour, and to have pursued the beaten foe, after the refreshments and repose enjoyed in one night. This was omitted. He adhered to the same course of conduct after the battle of Germantown, when the ill-boding tidings, from the northern warfare, emphatically called upon him to press his victory, in order to compensate for the heavy loss likely to be sustained by the captivity of Burgoyne and his army. But what is most surprising, after the Delaware was restored to his use, and the communication with the fleet completely enjoyed, that he should have relinquished his resolution of fighting Washington at White Marsh, having ascertained by his personal observation, that no material difficulty presented itself on the old York road, by which route he could, with facility, have turned Washington's left, and have compelled him to a change of position with battle, or to a perilous retreat. And last, though not least in magnitude, knowing as Sir William ought to have known, the sufferings and wants of every kind to which Washington was exposed at Valley Forge, as well as that his army was under innoculation for the small pox, while he himself was so abundantly supplied with every article requisite to give warmth and comfort to his troops, it is wonderful how he could omit venturing a winter campaign, to him promising every advantage, and to his antagonist, menacing every ill — this too, when the fate of Burgoyne was no longer doubtful, and its adverse influence on foreign powers unquestionable, unless balanced by some grand and daring stroke on his part. The only plan practicable was that above suggested; an experiment urged by all the consideration which ever can command high spirited enterprise.

These are undeniable truths; and they involve an inquisitive mind in a perplexity not easy to be untangled. It would be absurd to impute this conduct to a want of courage in Sir William Howe; for all acknowledge that he eminently possessed that quality. Nor can it be justly ascribed to either indolence of disposition, or a habit of sacrificing his duties to self care; for he possessed a robust body, with an active mind, and although a man of pleasure, subdued, when necessary, its captivating allurements with facility. To explain it, as some have done, by supposing him friendly to the revolution, and therefore to connive at its success, would be equally stupid and unjust, for no part of Sir William's life is stained with a single departure from the line of honor. Moreover, traitors are not to be found among British Generals, whose fidelity is secured by education, by their grade and importance in society, and by the magnificent rewards of government sure to follow distinguished efforts. The severe admonition, which Sir William had received from the disastrous battle of Bunker's, or rather Breed's Hill, furnishes the most probable explanation of this mysterious inertness. On that occasion, he commanded a body

of chosen troops, inured to discipline, and nearly double in number to his foe; possessed of artillery in abundance, prepared in the best manner; with an army at hand ready to re-inforce him, and led by officers, many of whom had seen service, all of whom had been bred to arms. His enemy was a corps of countrymen, who, for the first time, were unsheathing their swords; without artillery; defectively armed with fowling pieces, and muskets without bayonets; destitute of that cheering comfort, with which experience animates the soldier; with no other works than a slight redoubt, and a slighter trench, terminating in a yet slighter breastwork.

Sir William found this feeble enemy posted on the margin, and along the acclivity of the hill, commanded by Col. Prescott,* then unknown to fame; yet Sir William beheld these brave yeomen — while the conflagration of a town was blazing in their faces, while their flanks were exposed to maratime annoyance, and their front was assailed by regulars in proud array under the protection of cannon in full discharge — receive the terrible shock with firmness, coolly await his near approach and then resolutely pour in a charge, which disciplined courage could not sustain. He saw his gallant troops fly — afterwards brought to rally with their colors, and indignant at the repulse, return with redouble fury. Sir William again saw these daring countrymen, unappalled in heart, unbroken in line, true to their generous leader, and inbred valor, calmly reserving themselves for the fatal moment, when his close advance presented an opportunity of winging every ball with death. Again the British soldiers, with the pupil of the immortal Wolfe at their head, sought safety in flight. Restoring his troops to order, Sir William Howe advanced the third time, supported by naval co-operation, which had now nearly demolished our slender defences. Notwithstanding this tremendous combination, Sir William saw his gallant enemy maintain their ground, without prospect of succor, until their ammunition was nearly expended: then, abandoning their works as the British entered them, they took the only route open to their escape with decision and celerity.

*The honor conferred upon Col. Prescott was only a promotion in the army soon after established; and this, the writer was informed by a gentleman residing in Boston, who was well acquainted with Col. Prescott, consisted only in the grade of Lieut. Col. in a regiment of infantry. Considering himself entitled to a regiment, the hero of Breed's Hill would not accept a second station. Warren, who fell nobly supporting the action, was the favorite of the day, and has engrossed the fame due to Prescott. Bunker's Hill too has been considered as the field of battle, when it is well known that it was fought on Breed's Hill, the nearest of the two hills to Boston. No man reveres the character of Warren more than the writer; and he considers himself not only, by his obedience to truth, doing justice to Col. Prescott, but performing an acceptable service to the memory of the illustrious Warren, who, being a really great man, would disdain to wear laurels not his own.

The sad and impressive experience of this murderous day sunk deep into the mind of Sir William Howe; and it seems to have its influence on all his subsequent operations, with decisive control. In one instance only did he ever depart from the most pointed circumspection; and that was, in the assult on Red Bank, from his solicitude to restore the navigation of the Delaware deemed essential to the safety of his army. — The doleful issue of this single departure renewed the solemn advice inculcated at Breed's Hill, and extinguished his spirit of enterprise. This is the only way in which it seems to me, the mysterious inertness which marked the conduct of the British General, so fatal in its effect to the British cause, can be intelligibly solved.

The military annals of the world rarely furnish an achievement which equals the firmness and courage displayed on that proud day by the gallant band of Americans; and it certainly stands first in the brilliant events of our war.

When future generations shall inquire where are the men who gained the highest prize of glory in the arduous contest which ushered in our nation's birth — Upon Prescott and his companions in arms will the eye of history beam.

'A rapid sketch of the Battle of Breed's Hill.' By Maj. Gen. James Wilkinson, Published, 1816.

On the augmentation of his force in May, 1775, Gen. Gage determined to occupy the heights of Dorchester to the South of Boston, and those of Charlestown on the north of the town; the occupation of these points was not only necessary to the extension of his quarters, but indispensable to his holding of them. It was therefore determined in the first instance to seize upon Dorchester heights, as they were the most commanding, and of easiest access to the provincials. Preparations were accordingly made, and agreeably to the plan concerted, Major General Howe was to have landed at the point of the peninsula nearest the castle; Major General Clinton on the flat between that place and Nook's Hill, whilst Major General Burgoyne

was to take post on the neck, and amuse the provincials at Roxbury with a heavy cannonade; and from the srength, disposition, and equipments of those corps at that period, no effectual opposition, could have been made to this operation of the royal army, and a few days more would have put it in possession of Bunker's Hill also.

The arrangements of General Gage, preparatory to those meditated operations, necessarily attracted the observtion of the inhabitants of Boston, and being communicated to the Provincial Congress, they became jealous of some hostile movement, without being able to penetrate the object of it. It appears probable that under this impression, they recommended to a council of war, which had been instituted, the fortification of Dorchester neck and Bunker's Hill, on the ground of *precautionary defence*, the very same motive by which the council of British officers had been actuated; for if the views of the provincial Congress had been offensive, the heights of Dorchester could not have escaped their attention, because from thence both the town and harbor were exposed to annoyance.

The resolution of the provincial council of war being taken, Col. Prescott, a man of strong mind and dauntless resolution, who, I understand, had served in the seven years war as a provincial subaltern, seconded by a Colonel Brewer, who also served in the same war as a sergeant of rangers, was ordered with one thousand Massachusetts men, to take possession of Bunker's Hill, but whether by mistaking the spot, which seems improbable, Colonel Prescott passed the crown of Bunker's Hill about 600 yards, and broke ground on Breed's Hill, about 1200 yards from the British Battery on Cop's Hill in North Boston; he there projected regular squares, as well as I can recollect,* of fifty yards, without a flanking angle, the front of which, towards Boston, ranged about N. E. and S. W. with the entrance or aperture in the center of the opposite side; a parapet breast high had been thrown up, and a *retrenchment*, from the N. E. angle of the ditch in front, had been pushed about 100 yards down the declevity towards Mystic river, with the apparent design of continuing it across a hollow or indenture of the surface, to the bank of that river; from the N. E. angle of the redoubt, in rear, a post and rail fence, ranging with the N. E. side of the redoubt, ran back about 200 yards, where it was intersected nearly at right angles by a similar fence, extended about 300 yards to the bank of the Mystic river, which at the junction was 8 or 9 feet perpendicular height; in front of the last line of fence from the bank of the Mystic river, the ground was smooth, without obstruction, declining

*I examined it the 17th of March, 1776, the day the enemy evacuated Boston.

gently 60 or 80 yards, where it fell off abruptly. The bank of the Mystic river appeared firm and flat. These details are given from memoranda taken hastily, almost forty-one years since, and therefore I crave consideration, should they be in any particular imperfect. This rectangular work of Colonel Prescott's was so far advanced, that his men were pretty well covered in the ditch and retrenchment, and behind the parapet, before he was discovered in the morning, although the Lively frigate lay immediately before him in the ferry way between Charlestown and Boston, and a ship of the line, with the Falcon sloop of war, a few hundred yards to the eastward. The batteries of these vessels, and several gun boats, with that on Cop's Hill, were opened against the Provincials as soon as they were discovered, and the cannonade was continued without cessation; but from the elevation of the hill, with so little effect, that the Americans continued their work.

The British General was started by this encroachment, which left him no time to deliberate; for although Bunker's Hill would have given little annoyance to Boston, Breed's Hill positively commanded the northern part of it. Major General Howe, therefore, being first for duty, was ordered with ten companies of grenadiers, and ten of light infantry and the 5th, 38th, 43d and 52d regiments, to dislodge the Provincials; and on this service, seconded by Brigadier General Pigot, he embarked in barges about noon, and rowed to Morton's point, the eastern extremity of the peninsula of Charlstown, and the present site of the Navy Yard of the U. States, where he landed and formed without opposition; but disliking the disposition and aspect of the Provincials, he ordered his troops to set down, and sent back to Boston for a reinforcement, to land and co-operate from the side of Charlestown; for which service the 47th regiment and 1st battalion of marines were detached; and yet this corps of Sir William Howe, composed of five regiments, one battalion, and twenty flank companies,has been generally reported at *about* 2000 men; but surely 64 companies, at least, cannot be reckoned for less than 3000, and this number I shall claim, for the honor of Prescott and Stark, and the yeomanry of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, who, I have been assured by several spectators of the action, were the only troops engaged, and that the whole number did not exceed 1500 combatants. General Howe halted at Morton's point, as well to arrange and refresh his corps for combat, as to wait the reinforcement; being perfectly concealed from observation in his front by the nature of the ground. Prescott, at the same time manned his redoubt, and the retrenchment, and occupied the circumjacent ground in the most advantageous manner he could, with about 800 men out of the one thousand ordered for the service; whilst

General Putnam and a Colonel Gerrish took post with about 1,500 men, on and around Bunker's Hill. In the mean time, Colonel Stark, with his own regiment and that of Reed's from New Hampshire, amouting to about 700 men, half organized,* and wretchedly equipped,† were pressing for the scene of action; Captain H. Dearborn, (lately a Major-general, and turned out of service by the good President Madison, to make room for his favorites Brown and Scott) marched on Colonel Stark's right, traversed the causeway under a heavy cross fire from floating batteries, and passed General Putnam on Bunker Hill, with Col. Gerrish by his side, 1,000 or 1,200 men under their orders; as this corps of citizen soldiers approached the redoubt under the cannonade of the enemy's batteries from Charles' river, and Cop's Hill, Colonel Stark determined to form his men behind the post and rail fences before described; but when he reached the bank of Mystic, he cast his eyes down upon the beach, and as he observed to me on the spot, thought it was so plain a way that the enemy could not miss it; he therefore ordered a number of *his boys* to jump down the bank, and with stones from the adjacent walls, they soon threw up a strong breast work to the water's edge, behind which he posted triple ranks of his choice men; in the mean time, those who formed in rear of the fences, to conceal themselves from the enemy, filled the space between the rails with grass and hay, behind which they either knelt or sat down, every man having made an aperture in the grassy rampart, through which, while resting his fusee, he could take deliberate aim.

Captain Dearborn was posted with his company nearest the redoubt, on the right of Stark's line. About one o'clock Gen. Howe put two columns and a detachment with his artillery in motion; one column marched by the beach, and his light infantry led the other on the margin of the bank of the Mystic, and directly to the left of Colonel Stark's line; the detachment and artillery, from the best information I have been able to procure, inclined towards his left, and commenced a feeble attact against the redoubt at long shot, apparently with a de-

*The men hastily chose their company officers, but Stark had for his Major, Andrew McCleary, Esq. who had been distinguished for his resolution, zeal and patriotism, in planning and leading the attack of the castle at Portsmouth, the 1st Dec., 1774, and seizing the ordinances, arms, and military stores found therein; he had this day discharged his duty with great gallantry in the field, and escaped unhurt, but returning to bring off some men scattered in the rear, he was killed by a cannon ball from one of the enemy's floating batteries near the neck.

†The men were armed with fusils of various calibres, each individual was furnished with one quarter of a pound of powder in a horn, one flint, and lead sufficient to make fifteen charges either of ball or buck shot; the men prepared their ammunition according to their discretion, some with catridges and others with loose ammunition; the powder in their horns, and the lead in their pockets.

sign to draw the attention of Col. Prescott, whilst the column on the beach, and that on the bank of the Mystic, were designed to turn the flank and gain the rear of the Provincials on Breed's Hill, which they would have accomplished, if they had not been driven back. Col. Stark's orders to his men, who were concealed behind the stone wall on the beach, were not to fire until the front of the enemy reached a point which he had marked in the bank at eight or ten rods distance, and those on the bank immediately under his eye, were directed to reserve their fires until they could see the enemy's half gaiters, which from the form of the ground, would bring them within the same distance; in this situation of the Provincials, the columns of the enemy on the beach and the bank advanced by heavy platoons, without firing, as if not apprised of what awaited them, and when within the prescribed distance, received a volley which mowed down the whole front ranks, and the columns were instantly broken and fell back in disorder, that on the beach, entirely out of the combat, having ninety-six* men killed outright, before they could escape the American fire; on the banks the light infantry fell back until covered by the ground, then re-formed, and again advanced to the attack, and were again repulsed with similar slaughter; three times were these brave unfortunate men led to the charge, and were finally repulsed.† Sir William Howe now gave up his first plan of attack, to force his way into the rear of the Provincials, and making an entire new disposition, he directed his whole force against the redoubt, attacking it on three sides at the same time. Gen. Clinton, with the 47th regiment and the battalion of marines on the right; Gen. Pigot with the 5th, 38th and 43d regiments, in the center; and the Commander, with the grenadiers and 52d regiment on the left; the light infantry appear to have been put *hors de combat*.

The retrenchment was turned on the left and entered by the grenadiers, but being exposed to the perpendicular fire of the redoubt and the oblique fire of Captain Dearbon, they were obliged to abandon it. Assailed in his front and flank by three fold numbers, Prescott persevered with great obstinacy and valor, until his ammunition was nearly expended and the redout was forced by the grenadiers at the angle, which joined the retrenchment. He was then obliged to give away, and his men retreated in disorder. After the third repulse of the light infantry, and whilst the attact was carried against the redoubt,

* Mr. John Winslow, then in Boston, I understand, counted this number the next day. This gentleman served with much reputation in the Artillery of the Revolution, and was at the capture of Burgoyne, and has been long since a Major-general in the Militia of Massachusetts.

† I had these details from Col. Stark on the field, the 17th of March, 1776, and I remember his observing, ' the dead lay as thick as sheep in a foal ; ' it was at this point the enemy suffered most severely.

Stark's men behind the post and rail fence near the Mystic were unassailed and unoccupied, and the scenes near the redoubt being obscured by the smoke, they were induced to retreat reluctantly after the work was carried. If they had been thrown forward, where the light infantry finally gave way, to attack Sir William's right flank and rear, the issue of this conflict might have proved unfortunate for him; or if General Putnam had moved up with Col. Gerrish and the men who remained stationary within 600 yards of the combat, which lasted an hour and a half, the triumph of the provincials would have been decisive, and those of the British corps who were not killed must have surrendered, which would probably have terminated the contest, and prevented the disseverment of the British empire; but I understand from high authority, that it was in vain Col. Prescott sent messenger after messenger to entreat Gen. Putnam to come to his succor; he rode about Bunker's Hill, while the battle raged under his eye, with a number of entrenching tools slung across his horse, but did not advance a step, and was passed, with Col. Gerrish at his side, by Stark and Dearbon, as they retreated, near the spot where they saw him when they advanced; and for this conduct Col. Prescott never ceased to reprobate the General. In respect to the patriot, Doctor Warren, whose acknowledged talents and virtues, and zeal and devotion to the cause of his country, have consecrated his memory to endless time, he arrived at the redoubt a short time before the action commenced, and on his appearance, being known as a general officer recently appointed, the gallant Col. Prescott addressed himself to him, and demanded, 'Doctor Warren, do you come here to take command?' 'No, Colonel,' replied the Doctor, 'but to give what assistance I can, and to let these damned rascals see,' pointing to the British troops, 'that the Yankees will fight.'* I understood he performed his duty with his firelock, and it is certain he fell in the retreat, in the rear of, and a little to the right of the redoubt, it is said, by a random shot through the head.

The sanguinary merits of this combat would not disgrace Chippewa or Bridgwater; but in this case the liberties of North America formed the ground of combat, whilst in the other military eclat and individual exaltation were alone contended for. The loss of the provincials were 453 all ranks included, among whom, Dr. Warren, Col. Gardner, Lieutenant Colonel Parker, Major McClarey and Major Moore were the only characters of distinction. The loss of the British of all ranks was 1054, of whom 19 commission officers were killed, and among them one Lieutenant Colonel, two Majors, and seven Captains; and seventy were wounded. Such were

* This fact is taken from the lips of Dr. Eustis, our Minister at the Hague, who was present in the redoubt.

the immediate fruits of this battle, but its effects were co-extensive with the American war, leaving impressions on the mind of the British commander which saved the country from great loss of blood and heavy calamities. This isolated sketch being intended as a mere record of facts little known, it may be proper to state, that between Prescott and Stark there was no preconcert or plan of co-operation: each fought his distinct corps, and defended his ground, according to his own judgment, and there was no general command exercised on the field: as soon as the men were stationed, every one reasoned and resolved for his country, under the direcion of his own will; and the consequences shew what cannot be denied, that one deliberate, well directed shot, is worth a hundred and twenty thrown away by platoon or file firing, in the ordinary hurry of military actions, *particularly under the shade of night, and at* 600 *yards distance.* Gen. Ward the Commander in Chief, listened to the thunder of the battle from his quarters in Cambridge; and all the reinforcements which arrived at Bunker's Hill, after Col. Stark had passed, halted and kept company with Gen. Putnam and Col. Gerrish. The Col. was cashiered, but the General, being distinguished for his popularity, his integrity and patriotism, served as third in command at the termination of the American Revolution.

The habits and feelings of our countrymen at the commencement of the revolution have been described in the beginning of this volume, and when contrasted with those of the present day, they will receive a favorable award from every virtuous and reflecting citizen, while the youth of the present day, whether reared in military academies or metropolitan schools, though they may be taught to call ambition virtue, will find among their predecessors examples worthy of any age or nation, in which ambition was united with the sentiments of love of country and inseparable from social virtue. Those, then, who desire to stifle in the rising generation, that God-like sensibility, which weeps over the sufferings of a fellow creature, or to impair the force of the divine injunction which teaches man 'to do as he would be done by,' instead of instructing his son in the civil arts and useful sciences, should encourage military academies, and teach them how to wield the saber or to set the squadron, and

> 'To know the hardships of a lengthened war,
> What treasures it must cost, what scenes of blood,
> What vast expenses, what unnumbered toils,
> Equipping fleets and mustering armies ask.'

The following animated description of the battle of Breed's Hill and its attendant horrors, from the pen of one of the most elegant scholars and accomplished gentlemen of the day,* will

* Gen. Burgoyne.

exhibit to the people of these States, the barbarian influence of military education and habits on the human mind, and will shew them how men accustomed to scenes of horror and distress, may be charmed by the savage sublimity of blazing towns and bleeding hosts, to the dissolution of the first duties and obligations of intelligent social beings, and the extinction of the endearing and consoling virtues of humanity and religion.

'And now ensued one of the greatest scenes of war that can be conceived; if we look at the height, Howe's corps ascending the hill in the face of intrenchments, and in a very disadvantageous ground, were much engaged, to the left the enemy pouring in fresh troops by thousands over the land; and in the arm of the sea our ships and floating batteries cannonading them; straight before us a large and noble town, in one great blaze, the church steeple and heights of our own camp covered with spectators of the rest of the army, which was not engaged; the hills round the country covered with spectators; the enemy all in anxious suspense; and the roar of cannon, mortars and musketry; the crash of churches, ships upon the stocks, and whole streets falling together in ruins, to fill the ear; the storm of the redoubts, with the objects above described, to fill the eye; and the reflection that perhaps a defeat was a final loss to the British empire in America, to fill the mind, made the whole picture a complication of horror and importance, beyond any thing that ever came to my lot to witness.'

An account of the Battle of Bunker's Hill, by Major General Henry Dearbon, Published 1818.

On the 16th of June, 1775, it was determined that a fortified post should be established at or near Bunker's Hill.

A detachment of the army was ordered to advance early in the evening of that day, and commence the erection of a strong work on the heights in the rear of Charlestown, at that time called Breed's Hill, but from its proximity to Bunker's Hill, the

battle has taken its name from the latter eminence, which overlooks it.

The work was commenced and carried on under the direction of such engineers as we were able to procure at that time. It was a square redoubt, the curtains of which were about 60 or 70 feet in extent, with an intrenchment, or breast work, extending 50 or 60 feet from the northern angle, towards Mystic river.

In the course of the night the ramparts had been raised to the height of 6 or 7 feet, with a small ditch at their base, but it was in yet a rude and imperfect state. Being in full view from the northern heights of Boston, it was discovered by the enemy, as soon as the daylight appeared, and a determination was immediately formed by Gen. Gage, for dislodging our troops from this new and alarming position. Arrangements were promptly made for effecting this important object. The movement of the British troops indicating an attack, were soon discovered, in consequence of which, orders were immediately issued for the march of a considerable part of our army to reinforce the detachment at the redoubts on Breed's Hill; but such was the imperfect state of discipline, the want of knowledge in military science, and the deficiency of the materials of war, that the movement of the troops was extremely irregular and devoid of every thing like concert — each regiment advancing according to the opinions, *feelings* or caprice of its commander.

Col. Stark's* regiment was quartered in Medford, distant about four miles from the point of anticipated attack. It then consisted of thirteen companies, and was probably the largest regiment in the army. About ten o'clock in the morning he received orders to march. The regiment being destitute of ammunition, it formed in front of a house occupied as an arsenal, where each man received a *gill cup* full of powder, fifteen balls and one flint.

The several Captains were then ordered to march their companies to their respective quarters, and make up their powder and ball into cartridges, with the greatest possible despatch. As there were scarcely two muskets in a company of equal calibre, it was necessary to reduce the size of the balls for many of them; and as but a small proportion of the men had cartridge boxes, the remainder made use of powder horns and ball pouches.

After completing the necessary preparations for action, the

* This distinguished veteran is still alive, in the 91st year of his age, and resides in the State of New Hampshire. He is one of the THREE surviving general officers of the revolutionary war. The other two are Maj. Gen. St. Clair, who lives in the interior of Pennsylvania, and Brig. Gen. Huntington, of Connecticut.

regiment formed and marched about 1 o'clock. When it reached Charlastown Neck we found two regiments, halted, in consequence of a heavy enfilading fire thrown across it, of round, bar, and chain shot, from the Lively frigate, and floating batteries anchored in Charles river, and a floating battery lying in the river Mystic. Major M'Clary went forward, and observed to the commanders, if they did not intend to move on, he wished them to open and let our regiment pass; the latter was immediately done. My company being in front, I marched by the side of Col. Stark, who moving with a very deliberate pace, I suggested the propriety of quickening the march of the regiment, that it might sooner be relieved from the galling cross fire of the enemy. With a look peculiar to himself, he fixed his eyes upon me, and observed with great composure — 'Dearborn, one fresh man in action, is worth ten fatigued ones,' and continued to advance in the same cool and collected manner. When we had reached the top of Bunker's Hill, where Gen. Putnam had taken his station, the regiment halted for a few moments for the rear to come up.

Soon after, the enemy were discovered to have landed on the shore of Morton's point, in front of Breed's Hill, under cover of a tremendous fire of shot and shells from a battery on Cop's Hill, in Boston, which had opened on the redoubt at daybreak.

Major General Howe, and Brigadier General Pigot, were the commanders of the British forces which first landed, consisting of four battalions of infantry, ten companies of grenadiers, and ten of light infantry, with a train of artillery. They formed as they disembarked, but remained in that position, until they were reinforced by another detachment.

At this moment the veteran and gallant Stark, harangued his regiment in a short but animated address; then directed them to give three cheers, and make a rapid movement to the rail fence which ran from the left, and about 40 yards in the rear of the redoubt towards Mystic river.

Part of the grass having been recently cut, lay in winrows and cocks on the field. Another fence was taken up — the rails run through the one in front, and the hay mown in the vicinity, suspended upon them, from the bottom to the top, which had the appearance of a breast-work, but was in fact, no real cover to the men; it however served as a deception to the enemy. This was done by the direction of the '*committee of safety*,' of which James Winthrop, Esq. who then, and now lives in Cambridge, was one, as he has within a few years informed me. Mr. Winthrop himself acted as a volunteer on that day, and was wounded in the battle.

At this moment our regiment was formed in the rear of the rail fence, with one other small regiment from New Hampshire,

during the action. The whole of our line immediately gave way and retreated with rapidity and disorder towards Bunker's Hill; carrying off as many of the wounded as possible, so that only thirty-six or seven fell into the hands of the enemy, among whom were Lt. Col. Parker, and two or three other officers who fell in or near the redoubt.

When the troops arrived at the summit of Bunker's Hill, we found Gen. Putnam with nearly as many men as had been engaged in the battle; notwithstanding which no measure had been taken for reinforcing us, nor was there a shot fired to cover our retreat, or any movement made to check the advance of the enemy to this height, but on the contrary, Gen. Putman rode off, with a number of *spades and pick axes in his hands*, and the troops that had remained with him *inactive* during the whole of the action, although within a few hundred yards of the battle ground and no obstacle to impede their movement but musket balls.

The whole of our troops now descended the north-western declivity of Bunker's Hill, and recrossed the neck. Those of the New Hampshire line retired towards Winter Hill, and the others on toProspect Hill.

Some slight works were thrown up in the course of the evening — strong advance pickets were posted on the roads leading to Charlestown, and the troops anticipating an attack, rested on their arms.

It is a most extraordinary fact that the British did not make a single charge during the battle, which if attempted, would have been decisive and fatal to the Americans, as they did not carry into the field fifty bayonets. In my company there was but one.

Soon after the commencement of the action, a detachment from the British force in Boston was landed in Charlestown, and within a few moments the whole town appeared in a blaze. A dense column rose to a great height, and there being a gentle breeze from the south-west, it hung like a thunder cloud over the contending armies. A very few houses escaped the dreadful conflagration of this devoted town.

From similar mistakes, the fixed ammunition furnished for the field pieces was calculated for guns of a larger calibre, which prevented the use of field artillery, on both sides. There was no cavalry in either army. From the ships of war and a large battery on Cop's Hill, a heavy cannonade was kept up upon our line and redoubt, from the commencment to the close of the action and during the retreat; but with little effect, except killing the brave Maj. Andrew M'Clary of Col. Stark's regiment, soon after we retreated from Bunker's Hill. He was among the first officers of the army — possessing a sound judgment, of undaunted bravery, enterprising,

ardent and zealous, both as a patriot and soldier. His loss was severely felt by his compatriots in arms, while his country was deprived of the services of one of her most promising and distinguished champions of liberty.

After leaving the field of battle I met him and drank some spirit and water with him. He was animated and sanguine in the result of the conflict for independence, from the glorious display of valor which had distinguished his countrymen on that memorable day.

He soon observed that the British troops on Bunker's Hill appeared in motion, and said he would go and reconnoiter them, to see whether they were coming out over the neck, at the same time directed me to march my company down the road towards Charlestown. We were then at Tuft's house near Ploughed Hill. I immediately made a forward movement to the position he directed me to take, and halted while he proceeded to the old pound, which stood on the site now occupied as a tavern house not far from the entrance to the neck. After he had satisfied himself that the enemy did not intend to leave their strong posts on the heights, he was returning towards me, and within twelve or fifteen rods of where I stood, with my company, a random shot, from one of the frigates lying near where the center of Craigie's bridge now is, passed directly through his body and put to flight one of the most heroic souls that ever animated man.

He leaped two or three feet from the ground, pitched forward, and fell dead upon his face. I had him carried to Medford, where he was interred, with all the respect and honors we could exhibit to the manes of a great and good man. He was my bosom friend; we had grown up together on terms of the greatest intimacy, and I loved him as a brother.

My position in the battle, more the result of accident than any regularity of formation, was on the right of the line at the rail fence, which afforded me a fair view of the whole scene of action.

Our men were intent on cutting down every officer they could distinguish in the British line. When any of them discovered one he would instantly exclaim '*there*,' '*see that officer*,' '*let us have a shot at him*,' when two or three would fire at the same moment; and as our soldiers were excellent marksmen and rested their muskets over the fence, they were sure of their object. An officer was discovered to mount near the position of Gen. Howe, on the left of the British line, and ride towards our left; which a column was endeavoring to turn. This was the only officer on horseback during the day, and as he approached the rail fence, I heard a number of our men observe, 'there,' 'there,' 'see that officer on horse-back'—'let us fire,' 'no, not yet,'—'wait until he gets to that little

knoll,' —'now' — when they fired and he instantly fell dead from his horse. It poved to be Major Pitcairn, a distinguished officer. — The fire of the enemy was so badly directed, I should persume that forty-nine balls out of fifty passed from one to six feet over our heads, for I noticed an apple-tree, some paces in the rear, which had scercely a ball in it from the trunk and ground as high as a man's head, while the trunk and branches above were literally cut to pieces.

I commanded a full company in action and had only one man killed and five wounded, which was a full average of the loss we sustained, excepting those who fell while sallying from the redoubt, when it was stormed by the British column.

Our total loss in killed was eighty-eight, and as well as I can recollect, upwards of two hundred wounded. Our platoon officers carried fusees.

In the course of the action, after firing away what ammunition I had, I walked to the higher ground to the right, in rear of the redoubt, with an expectation of procuring from some of the dead or wounded men who lay there, a supply. While in that situation, I saw at some distance a dead man lying near a small locust tree. As he appeared to be much better dressed than our men generally were, I asked a man who was passing me, if he knew who it was. He replied, 'It is DR. WARREN.'

I did not personally know Dr. Warren, but was acquainted with his public character. He had been recently appointed a General in our service, but had not taken command. He was President of the Provincial Congress then sitting at Watertown, and having heard that there would probably be an action, had come to share in whatever might happen, in the character of a volunteer, and was unfortunately killed early in the action. His death was a severe misfortune to his friends and country. Posterity will appreciate his worth and do honor to his memory. He is immortalized as a patriot, who gloriously fell in defence of freedom.

The number of our troops in action, as near as I was able to ascertain did not exceed fifteen hundred. The force of the British, at the commencement of the action, was estimated at about the same number, but they were frequently reinforced.

Had our ammunition held out, or had we been supplied with only fifteen or twenty rounds, I have no doubt that we should have killed and wounded the greatest part of their army, and compelled the remainder to have laid down their arms; for it was with the greatest difficulty that they were brought up the last time.

Our fire was so deadly, particularly to the officers, that it would have been impossible to have resisted it, but for a short time longer.

I did not see a man quit his post during the action, and do

not believe a single soldier, who was brought into the field, fled, until the whole army was obliged to retreat, for want of powder and ball.

The total loss of the British was about twelve hundred; upwards of five hundred killed and between six and seven hundred wounded. The Welsh fusileers suffered most severely; they came into action five hundred strong, and all were killed or wounded but eighty-three.

I will mention an extraordinary circumstance to show how far the temporary reputation of a man may affect the minds of all classes of society.

Gen. Putnam had entered our army at the commencement of the revolutionary war, with such a universal popularity as can scarcely NOW be conceived, even by those who THEN felt the whole force of it, and no one can at this time offer any satisfactory reasons why he was held in such high estimation.

In the battle of Bunker's Hill he took post *on the declevity towards Charlestown neck;* where I saw him on horse-back as we passed on to Breed's Hill, with Col. Gerrish by his side. I heard the gallant Col. Prescott (who commanded in the redoubt) observe after the war, at the table of his Excellency, James Bowdoin, then Governor of this Commonwealth, 'that he sent three messengers during the battle to Gen. Putnam, requesting him to come forward and take the command, there being no general officer present, and the relative rank of the Colonel not having been settled; but that he received no answer, and his whole conduct was such, both during the action and the retreat, that he ought to have been shot.' He remained at or near the top of Bunker Hill until the retreat, with Col. Gerrish by his side; I saw them together when we retreated. He not only continued at that distance himself during the whole of the action, but had a force with him nearly as large as that engaged. No reinforcement of men or ammunition was sent to our assistance; and, instead of attempting to cover the retreat of those who had expended their last shot in the face of the enemy, he retreated in company with Col. Gerrish, and his whole force, without discharging a single musket; but what is still more astonishing, Col. Gerrish was arrested for *cowardice, tried, cashiered, and universally execrated;* while not a word was said against the conduct of Gen. Putnam, *whose extraordinary popularity* alone saved him, not only from trial, but even from censure. Col. Gerrish commanded a regiment, and should have been at its head. His regiment was not in action although ordered — but as he was in the suit of the Gen. and appeared to be in the situation of Adj. Gen., why was he not directed by Putnam to join it, or the regiment sent into action under the senior officer present with it.

When Gen. *Putnam's* ephemeral and unaccountable popular-

ity subsided or faded away, and the minds of the people were released from the shackles of a delusive trance, the circumstances relating to Bunker Hill were *viewed and talked* of in a *very different light*, and the section of the unfortunate Col. *Gerrish* as a *scape-goat* considered as a *mysterious* and *inexplicable event.*

I have no private feeling to gratify by making this statement in relation to Gen. *Putnam*, as I never had any intercourse with him, and was only in the army where he was present, for a few months; but at this late period, I conceive it a duty to give a fair and impartial account of one of the most important battles during the war of Independence, and all the cirumstances connected with it so far as I had the means of being correctly informed.

It is a duty I owe to posterity, and the character of those brave officers who bore a share in the hardships of the revolution.

Nothing like discipline had entered our army at that time. Gen. *Ward*, then commander-in-chief, *remained in his quarters in Cambridge*, and apparently took no *interest* or *part* in the transactions of the day.

No general officer, except *Putnam*, appeared in sight, nor did any officer assume the command, undertake to form the troops, or give any orders, that I heard except Col. Stark, who directed his rigiment to reserve their fire on the retreat of the enemy, until they advanced again. Every platoon officer was engaged in dircharging his own musket and left his men to fire as they pleased, but never without a sure aim at some particular object, which was more destructive than any mode which could have been adopted with troops who were not inured to discipline, and never had been in battle, but were still familiar with the use of arms, from boyhood, and each having his peculiar manner of loading and firing, which had been practised upon for years, with the same gun; any attempt to control them by uniformity and system, would have rendered their fires infinitely less fatal to the enemy. Not an officer or soldier of the continental troops engaged was in uniform, but were in the plain and ordinary dress of citizens; nor was there an officer on horse-back. (Signed) H. DEARBORN.

In the forgoing account it will be noticed, as a thing hardly to have been expected, that the narrators should have so well agreed in all the leading features of their narrations; when, too it is considered that they were very little acquainted with each other during the revolutionary war, never having served in the same corps or division of the army, or been intimate afterwards in civil life. In one particular only do they differ, and that of little or no consequence as respects the main transactions of the day. Heath and Wilkinson state that Gen. Warren fell at the commencement of or during the retreat. Dearborn says he fell early in the action.

In this particular the veracity of the narrators are not necessarily impeached. Heath and Wilkinson were neither of them present when the fate of Warren was sealed, and therefore must have made their statement from common report, or from the best information they could obtain at the time they wrote. Dearborn with more correctness tells us how he came by his information, for he was not personally acquainted with Warren. Seeing a well dressed man dead, he inquired who it was, and was told, 'It is Dr. Warren.' This was in the course of the action, and there could have been no inducement for the person inquired of to have given wrong information. This question is settled by Dea. Lawrence of Groton, who knew Gen. Warren well, 'saw him when the ball struck him, and from that time till he expired,' and this was during the action.

But what was not to have been expected, is, that all the above accounts should be contradicted and attempted to be invalidated by the statement of a Col. John Small of the British army, related to Col. John Trumbull in London, and by Trumbull related to Col. Daniel Putnam, the son of Gen. Putnam, and published by the latter gentleman in 1818, and is as follows:

'In the summer of 1786 I became acquainted in London with Col. John Small, of the British army, who had served in America many years, and had known General Putnam intimately during the war of Canada from 1756 to 1763. From him, I had the two following anecdotes respecting the battle of Bunker Hill; I shall nearly repeat his words; looking at the picture which I had almost completed, he said: 'I do not like the situation in which you have placed my old friend Putnam; you have not done him justice.* I wish you would alter that part of your picture, and introduce a circumstance which actually happened, and which I can never forget. When the British troops advanced the second time to the attact of the redoubt, I, with other officers was in front of the line to encour-

*The injustice Small here alluded to, was that Trumbull in his picture of Bunker Hill, had placed Putnam on the hill above where the battle was and about 600 yards from it.

age the men; we had advanced very near the works undisturbed, when an irregular fire, like a feu-de-joie, was poured in upon us; it was cruelly fatal. The troops fell back, and when I looked to the right and left, I saw not one officer standing; I glanced my eye to the enemy, and saw several young men levelling their pieces at me; I knew their excellence as marksmen, and considered myself gone. At that moment my old friend Putnam rushed forward, and striking up the muzzles of their pieces with his sword, cried out, 'For God's sake, my lads, don't fire at that man — I love him as I do my brother.' We were so near each other that I heard his words distinctly. He was obeyed; I bowed, thanked him, and walked away unmolested.

The other anecdote relates to the death of Gen. Warren.

'At the moment when the troops succeeded in carrying the redoubt, and the Americans were in full retreat, Gen. Howe (who had been hurt by a spent ball which bruised his ancle) was leaning on my arm. He called suddenly to me: 'Do you see that elegant young man who has just fallen? Do you know him?' I looked to the spot towards which he pointed — 'Good God, sir, I believe it is my friend Warren.' 'Leave me then instantly — run — keep off the troops, save him if possible.' I flew to the spot, 'my dear friend,' I said to him, 'I hope you are not badly hurt;' he looked up, seemed to recollect me, smiled and died! a musket ball had passed through the upper part of his head. JOHN TRUMBULL.'

DANIEL PUTNAM, Esq.

If the story of Small is true, Dearborn is mistaken as to the time of Warren's death, and Heath, Lee and Wilkinson, as well as Dearborn, are mistaken as to who was the proper commanding officer in the redoubt. They all say Prescott was, but if Putnam was present in the redoubt, as Small would have it, then was he the commander, being senior to Prescott.

There is considerable reason, from the face of Small's story, to induce us to doubt its correctness. The conversation between Putnam and Small, considering the time, place and situation of the parties, is unnatural. If Putnam was desirous of saving the life of Small, from former acquaintance and attachment, there could be no good reason why he should not have made him a prisoner as was his duty, and certainly in his power.

It is not probable that this conversation should have taken place, and eight hundred persons present in the redoubt, and within hearing distance, and no one then or since heard a word of it till 1818, thirty-three years after Small says it happened. The other part of Small's story relating to the death of General Warren, is not more probable from the face of it. Warren was not a *young man*, as Small calls him, having received the hon-

ors of Harvard University in 1759, he was at least middle aged. Small calls Warren his friend; this implies a previous and intimate acquaintance. How could this have been; Warren was not in the War of Canada, and from the time Small arrived in Boston in 1775, to the day of Bunker Hill battle, Small was besieged in Boston, and Warren presiding in the Provincial Congress at Watertown.

It may be from the face of Small's story to Trumbull, that Trumbull has mistaken his story, but probable that the whole is the mere rodomontade of Small. It has always been acknowledged that Gen. Howe was the bravest among the brave, and exposed his person more that usual on that day, but Small surpassed him, for when Howe thought it prudent to retire from the scene of butchery, Small remained exposed and alone, and uselessly so.

If these observations together with the impartial narratives of four general officers of the American army, are not sufficient to entirely invalidate Small's statement, there is further and sufficient proof to destroy it. The following statement of Deacon Lawrence, under oath, goes directly to the point.

'I, Samuel Lawrence, of Grotton, Esquire, testify and say, that I was at the battle of Bunker Hill, (so called) in Col. William Prescott's regiment; that I marched with the regiment to the point on Breed's Hill, which was fixed on for a redoubt; that I assisted in throwing up the work, and in forming a redoubt, under Col. Prescott, who directed the whole of this operation. The work was begun about nine o'clock in the evening of June 16, 1775. I was there the whole time, and continued in the redoubt, or in the little fort, during the whole battle until the enemy came in and a retreat was ordered.

Gen. Putnam was not present either while the works were erecting, or during the battle. I could distinctly see the rail fence and the troops stationed there during the battle but Gen. Putnam was not present as I saw. Just before the battle commenced, General Warren came to the redoubt. He had on a blue coat, white wistcoat, and I think a cocked hat, but, of this I am not certain — Col. Prescott advanced to him, said he was glad to see him, and hoped he would take the command. Gen. Warren replied, 'no, he came to see the action, but not to take command; that he was only a volunteer on that day.' Afterwards I saw General Warren shot; I saw him when the ball struck him, and from that time until he expired. No British officer was within forty or fifty rods of him, from the time the ball struck him until I saw he was dead.

(Signed,) SAMUEL LAWRENCE.'

Sworn to before Samuel Dana, Justice of the Peace, &c.

The following statement of Samuel R. Trevett, pointedly contradicts Col. Small's story.

'I commanded a company of artillery from the town of Marblehead, attached to Col. Richard Gridley's regiment, stationed at Cambridge. About one o'clock in the afternoon of the 17th of June, 1775, I left Cambridge with my company, for Bunker's Hill. When about a quarter of a mile from the Colleges, I saw Gen. Putnam pass upon a horse towards the town of Cambridge, and in 15 or 20 minutes I saw him pass in like manner towards Charlestown. When I arrived at Bunker's Hill, on the north west side, I there saw Gen. Putnam dismounted, in company with several others. I halted my company, and went forward to select a station for my pieces, and on my return, saw Gen. Putnam as before; the American and English forces being then engaged. I proceeded on with my company, and soon after joined that part of the American force at the rail fence, towards Mystic river, the Americans commenced a general retreat. As I was descending the northwest side of Bunker's Hill, I again saw Gen. Putman in the same place, putting his tent upon his horse. I asked him where I should retreat with the field piece I had brought off: he replied to Cambridge, and I accordingly marched my company to Cambridge.

In the month of May or June, 1795, being in the island of Guernsey, I had occasion in the course of business to call upon Maj. (alias Col.) Small, the Governor. After closing my business with him, he remarked that my countenance was not new to him, and inquired where he had seen me. I replied, that it must have been at Col. Ingersoll's tavern in Boston — and that I had once been opposed to him in action. He immediately entered into a free and general conversation on the battle of Bunker's Hill, — but he made no inquiry after Gen. Putnam, nor did he in any way, either directly or indirectly, allude to him, either as a friend or an officer.

SAMUEL R. TREVETT.'

Boston, June 2, 1818.

Affidavit of Robert Bradford Wilkins.

'I, Robert B. Wilkins, of Concord, county of Rockingham, State of New Hampshire, do testify and say, that I acted as a private soldier in the battle of Breed's Hill, otherwise called the battle of Bunker's Hill, on the 17th of June, 1775; that I was attached to Capt. Levi Spaulding's company, of Col. Jas. Reed's regiment. That I was on that day, stationed at Charlestown, below the neck and on the main street, that our company proceeded from thence on to Bunker's Hill, over the hollow and on to Breed's Hill, that after our company arrived at the works, near Mystic river, I was sent back on an errand, by the Captain, to the house where we had been stationed, and on returning by a route nearer to the neck, than that we first passed, I saw Gen. Putnam with Col. Gerrish, as near as I could judge one hundred rods from the line and troops I had left; that the firing with small arms commenced after I returned the second time; that in the action the enemy were three times repulsed; that in the interval between the second and third repulse, I received a severe wound from a musket ball in my right elbow joint, for which wound, I have since received a pension from the government of the United States; that I then left the field of battle just before the retreat of the Americans from the fort, and passed on to Bunker's Hill, where I found Gen. Putnam and Col. Gerrish in nearly the same place where I first saw them; that I was then almost exhausted from the loss of blood; that Col. Gerrish gave me some refreshment and bound a handkerchief around my arm at the place of my wound, and sent two men to assist me over the neck, who left me before I had cleared the neck, and I fell and lay on the ground, until nearly all the Americans had retreated from the hill, when I was helped off. I served from the commencement to the close of the revolutionary war, and acted successively as a private, a sergeant, ensign and lieutenant.

ROBERT B. WILKINS.'

Sworn to before Samuel Greene, Justice of the Peace.
May 30, 1818.

Rev. Dr. William Bentley's statement.

SALEM, May 20, 1818.

'I was with Gen. Stark on the 31st of May, 1810. I always had a deep interest in the man, and usually kept a notice of the subject of our conversation. I found him in great good humor, and soon upon his old war stories, which I did not take care minutely to preserve, because Maj. Caleb Stark had told me he was collecting every thing worthy of the public eye, and to be published after his father's decease, and in due honor of his memory. As among other objects, I intended to get a likeness, and was uncertain of success, among the maps, prints, and papers I carried him, were some portraits, and among them was one of General Putnam. I recollect upon the sight of the head of Gen. Putnam he said 'My Champlain' as he called me, you know my opinion of that man. Had he done his duty, he would have decided the fate of his country in the first action. He then proceeded to describe to me the scene of action and the '*pen*' as he called the enclosed works, and breast works, and gave his reasons for not entering it, and the want of judgment in the works. He then told me where he saw Gen. Putnam and what was done on the occasion, and his remarks were as severe as his genius and the sentiments of ardent patriotism could make them. As Gen. Stark always used the same language on the subject, it will be recollected by many of his friends. WILLIAM BENTLEY.'

Certificate of the Rev. Daniel Chaplin, D. D. of Groton, and Rev. John Bullard of Pepperell.

'This may certify the public, that we whose names we have given, were in the habits of intimacy with Col. W. Prescott, of Pepperell, a man of the strictest integrity during most of the period after he left the revolutionary army until his death; that at sundry times in conversation with him about the war, particularly about the battle of Bunker Hill, so called, he uniformly told us, that Maj. Gen. Warren came to the fort on Breed's Hill, which had been formed the night preceding, a little before the British made an attack on the works; that he, Colonel Prescott, said to Gen. Warren, 'I am happy to see you, General,' or using words to the same effect, 'for you will now take command, and I will obey your orders and am relieved.' Said Gen. Warren to him, in reply, 'I have no command here, Col. Prescott, I am a volunteer, I came to learn actual service.' Prescott said, 'I wish then you would look at the works we have thrown up, and give your opinion.' Warren replied — 'You are better acquainted with military matters than I am.' After which they immediately parted, and met not again. Col. Prescott further informed us repeatedly, that when a retreat was ordered and commenced, he was descending the hill, he met Gen. *Putnam*, ond said to him, 'why did you not support me, Gen., with your men, as I had reason to expect, according to agreement.' Putnam answered, 'I could not *drive* the dogs up.' Prescott pointedly said to him, 'If you could not *drive* them up, you might have *led* them up.' We have good reason to believe further, from declarations of some of our parishoners, men of respectability, whose veracity cannot be doubted, who belonged to Col. Prescott's regiment, and were present thro' the whole service, that Gen. *Putnam* was not on Breed's Hill the night preceding, or on that day, except that just before the attack was made, he might have gone to the fort and ordered the tools to be carried off, that they might not fall into the hands of the enemy in the event of his carrying the works, and holding the ground, and that he and his men, with Col. Gerrish, remained on the side of Bunker Hill towards the neck during the whole action.

(Signed,) DANIEL CHAPLIN,
JOHN BULLARD.'

Groton, June 5, 1818.

Statement of the Hon. Abel Parker, Judge of Probate.

'As I was in the battle on Breed's Hill, otherwise called Bunker's Hill, on the 17th day of June, 1775, and there received one ball through my leg, another having passed through my clothes, all accounts of that battle which I have seen published, have been to me extremely interesting. But I have never seen any account which I considered in any degree correct, until the one published by Gen. Dearbon. On perusing that account with the utmost attention, I could discover but one mistake, and that related to his assertion, 'that there was not a man that flinched,' or to that effect, for his narrative is not now before me, and even in that case, I believe the General's assertion may be strictly true, if his meaning be confined to the time after his arrival on the hill. Previous to that, there were many who left the ground at the fort, particularly at the landing of the British troops; but after the commencement of the battle with small arms, I know of no man's leaving his post, until the order to retreat was given by Col. Prescot. But notwithstanding the correctness of Gen. Dearbon's description of that battle, some persons seem to be much exasperated by it, in particular as to what he asserted in regard to Gen. Putnam. As long as they confined themselves to mere declamation, without bringing forward any evidence to disprove the General's assertion, I deemed it unnecessary for me to appear in vindication of the General's statement. But on perusing a letter from Col. Trumbull to Col. *Putnam*, wherein mention is made of a conversation with Col. Small in London, I concluded, notwithstanding my aversion to taking any part in a newspaper discussion, that to remain any longer silent, would be absolutely criminal. I shall, therefore, in as concise a manner as possible, state what I know relating to that memorable battle. Immediately after the battle of Lexington, I engaged in the service of my country, in Capt. John Nutting's company, in the regiment commanded by Col. Wm. *Prescott*. Both of these officers belonged to the town of *Pepperell*, where I then lived. I was at this time a little more than twenty-two years of age. On the 16th day of June following, Col. *Prescott's* regiment with two or three others, were ordered to march and take possession of Bunker's Hill. On our arrival at the place called Charlestown neck, a halt was made, and Capt. Nutting's company, with ten of the Connecticut troops, were detached to proceed into Charlestown as a guard; the remainder marched to the hill, which in fact was Breed's, and not Bunker's Hill, where they commenced building a small fort. In the morning, not far from sun-rising, the alarm was fired from the British vessel lying in the river. Sometime after this, Nutting's company

left the town, and marched to join the regiment on the [illegible]. When we arrived there, the fort was in considerable [illegible]rdness, and the troops commenced throwing up the bre[illegible]work mentioned by Gen. Dearborn. We had not been [illegible]g employed in that work, before the cannon shot from a [illegible] in Boston, and the vessels lying in the river were poured [illegible] upon us in great profusion. However, the work progressed until it would answer the purpose for which it was designed. But the firing from the British artillery continued with unabated fury. Sometime before this, there was brought to the fort several brass field pieces, one of which was actually fired towards Boston; but the ball did not reach the town. It had this effect, however, on the British, that it made them double their diligence in firing upon us. In the time of this heavy fire, I, for the first time that day, saw Gen. *Putnam* standing with others, under cover of the north wall of the fort, where, I believe, he remained until the British troops made their appearance in their boats. At this time the artillery was withdrawn from the fort, but by whose orders I know not, and Gen. *Putnam*, at, or near the same time, left the fort. The removing of the artillery, and *Gen. Putnam's* departure, took place a little before (if my memory be correct) the New Hampshire troops made their appearance on the hill. I saw them when they arrived, and witnessed their dexterity in throwing up their breast-work of rails and hay. When the British first made their attack with small arms, I was at the breast work, where I remained until I received my wound from the party who flanked it; I then went to the fort, where I remained until the order to retreat was given by Col. *Prescott*. After my arrival at the fort I had a perfect opportunity of viewing the operations of the day, and noticed Col. P. as the only person who took upon him any command. He frequently ordered the men from one side to the other, in order to defend that part which was prest hardest by the enemy; and I was within a few yards of him, when the order to retreat was given; and I affirm, that at that time *Gen. Putnam* was not in the fort, neither had he been there at any time after my entering the same; and I have no hesitation in declaring, that the story told by Col. Small to Col. Trumbull, concerning Gen. Putnam's saving him from the fire of our men at that time, is altogether unfounded. ABEL PARKER.'

Jeffrey, N. H., May 27, 1818.

Gen. Wilkinson in his account of the battle says, 'he has been assured that the Massachusetts and New Hampshire troops were the only ones engaged in the action.—This is a mistake, and probably arose from the fact, that Captain Knowlton of the Connecticut line, with four lieutenants, and one hundred and twenty men, marched on to the Hill on the evening of the 16th of June, 1775, with Col. Prescott, and were considered a part of his command of one thousand men. Botta in his 'History of the war of the Independence of the United States of America,' considers Prescott, Starke and Knowlton as separate commanders of the allied forces engaged. He says, 'The troops of Massachusetts commanded by Col. Prescott, occupied Charlestown, the redoubt, and part of the trench; those of Connecticut, commanded by Capt. Knowlton, and those of New Hampshire, commanded by Colonel Stark, the rest of the trench.

Capt. Knowlton was a native of Ashford, Conn., and during the seige of Boston was promoted to a majority, and commanded the party which burnt the residue of the buildings in Charlestown, in the night time, which service was performed to the approbation of the commander-in-chief, under the fire of the enemy's batteries on Bunker's Hill, which they had fortified and then occupied. During the occupancy of New York, by Washington, he was promoted to a Lieut. Colonelcy; and after the unfortunate, if not disgraceful retreat of the Americans from that city, the enemy appeared before our lines at Harlem Heights, when Knowlton was personally calledon by Washington to meet and check their advance, and enspirit our dejected army, which he did with alacrity and great animation. In this renconter he lost his valuable life.

He was a brave and intelligent officer, and an ardent and upright patriot; always first among equals.

His four Lieutenants were, John Keyes, —— Huntington, Thomas Grosvenor, and Esquire Hills. Keys and Hills were both from Ashford,* and in 1818 were both alive and residing in the State of New York. How long they continued in the army, or to what rank they attained during the war of Independence is not known. But Keyes, after the war, had the title of General, and Hills that of Captain. By their cotemporaries they were considered excellent officers.

Huntington was afterwards promoted to the rank of Brig.

* Godfrey Grosvenor, Esq. of Minot, formerly of Connecticut, believes Gen. Huntington to have been one of Knowlton's Lieutenants. Lemuel Grosvenor, now P. M. of Pomfret, Con. now 83 years old, and who was in the army at Boston, is not certain; but names the three above, and if Huntington was not one, he does not recollect who was.

General on the continental establishment, and left the army at the close of the war with that rank.

Grosvenor, at the close of the war, commanded a regiment on the continental establishment. Both the latter gentlemen during their military career, were always respected and sometimes distinguished as the rapidity of their promotions would indicate. In civil life they were highly respected. They were both living in Connecticut since the year 1818.

Such a corps as Knowlton's, and thus officered, deserve to be noticed as the compeers of Prescott and Stark.

Knowlton lost more men in the action, than any corps of the army engaged in the action on Breed's Hill, according to the numbers he commanded.

From the foregoing accounts it may be persumed that all the facts relative to this important day, of sufficient magnitude to be transmitted to posterity are to be found. And at least one mistake rectified. This relates to an individual, Colonel Samuel Gerrish, who till this day stood high in the public estimation. He had been an officer of respectable standing in the French War, and then recently elected unanimously by the Provincial Congress, the first Colonel in the Masachusetts forces. After this battle he was arrested for cowardice, tried cashiered and *universally execrated.* No one in the army at the time, who was acquainted with the transaction, believed him guilty. The general opinion and conversation was that the army on that day were guilty of many sins, and Gerrish being the largest man in it, was selected to make the atonement.

The late Judge Tudor who acted as Judge Advocate to the Court Martial has publicly and repeatedly said that he considered Col. Gerrish *as very hardly dealt by.* Col. James Scamman, who commanded a regiment on that day, from the County of York, and arrested, tried and acquitted of the same charge, always declared when speaking of Gerrish's fate that any officer in the army might have been found guilty of the same offence with as much justice as Gerrish. These individual opinions were not considered by many of sufficient weight, to balance the opinion of a Court Martial and to rescue the character of Gerrish from infamy — although it may be admitted that all Courts, and espcially Court Martials, are often influenced, if not governed, by feelings and prejudices, and sometimes by corruption. But when Gen. Dearborn who always acted without fear or reproach, adds his opinion in favor of Gerrish, there seems to be no sufficient reason why he should not be fully credited.

It is true Gerrish remained on Bunker Hill, out of the fire of the enemy during the action, and so did fifteen hundred other officers and privates, who should have been in the action, among whom was at least one Major General. It was never pretended that Gerrish was ever ordered by this general officer to go into action; but on the contrary, this general was desirous to fortify Bunker's Hill, instead of defending Breed's Hill, which was then attacked; and eventually carried for the want of these very fifteen hundred men, who could have relieved those engaged in five minutes march. The reason Gen. Putnam says this was not done, was that he could not *drive the dogs up.*

The motives which actuated Gen. Dearborn in making this statement, in favor of the mal-treated Gerrish, at the time he did, should be duly appreciated, as nothing but his respect for truth, and his object that of rescuing the character of an honest patriot from unjust and cruel censure, could have induced him to make this statement.